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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8103
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 001003

SIPDIS

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EB/TRA/AN, EB/TRA/OTP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [IO](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: AFTER 14 YEARS, DOMINICAN CIVAIR AUTHORITY EYES
CATEGORY ONE STATUS

REF: STATE 053163

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Since 1993, the Dominican Republic's civil aviation authority (CAA) has remained on Category 2 status per the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA). Under Category 2, the Dominican Republic is not in compliance with minimum international standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Within the last two years, however, the CAA has made an about-face with assistance from USG agencies. The quick turnaround can be attributed to the Dominican Republic's desire to gain a seat on the ICAO board, establish a Dominican airline with international service, and attract more aviation business. Aviation officials state that the CAA did very well during the recent IASA reassessment, which concluded on April 26, and that the Dominican Republic might be in compliance with IASA Category 1 requirements pending further review by FAA and other USG agencies. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Per reftel, the FAA conducted an initial assessment of the level of aviation safety oversight provided by the Government of the Dominican Republic in 1993. At that time, the oversight was not in accordance with minimum international standards established by ICAO.

¶3. (U) When the Fernandez administration took office in 2004, FAA and Embassy officials met with their CAA counterparts to revive the aviation reform process in the Dominican Republic. CAA's director Norge Botello signed on to the reform process, which allowed FAA officials to provide technical assistance to CAA in the areas of safety inspections, regulations, and most importantly, the development of a new aviation law.

¶4. (SBU) According to FAA inspectors, CAA revamped their operations to comply with the new aviation law, which was passed in late 2006. FAA officials conducted a technical review in mid-March 2007 and told econoff that they were impressed with CAA's recent turnaround and current performance. After the recent IASA reassessment, FAA officials stated that the Dominican Republic's CAA had done an excellent job in the areas of training, regulations, licenses, equipment readiness and software applications, and implementation of the new aviation law. FAA officials believe that the CAA could be a regional leader with some additional FAA technical assistance.

¶5. (SBU) CAA wants Category 1 status in order to win a seat on the ICAO board (elections are in September), to establish a Dominican air carrier with international service, and to become a more competitive international hub for travelers seeking a Caribbean destination. International travelers would like to see the Dominican Republic as a Category 1

country for safety purposes.

¶6. This report and extensive other material can be consulted on our SIPRNET site,
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/>
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